THE ROYAL TUTOR

Chapter 31

Higasa Akai

Chapter 31
I Want to Understand

IT WAS IN THIS VERY SPOT, NOT SO LONG AGO, THAT FATHER GAVE ME HIS BLESSING TO WORK HERE AT THE CAFÉ...
.....
GOOD WORK TODAY. CAN YOU BRING THE SIGN IN?
RIGHT AWAY!

THOUGH, I HAVEN'T PROPERLY THANKED FATHER FOR HIS PERMISSION SINCE THEN...
.....
I STILL CAN HARDLY BELIEVE HE'S ALLOWED ME TO HIDE MY ROYAL IDENTITY AND CARRY ON WORKING LIKE A COMMONER...
...EVEN IF IT IS ON THE CONDITION THAT TEACH ALWAYS ACCOMPANIES ME.
?
AH HA HA HA!
WAIT, WHAT AM I THINKING? I'M NOT THE SAPPY SORT! FAR FROM IT!
HA HA!
IT WAS NO TROUBLE.
MY WORK PROGRESSED SMOOTHLY WITH THE DELIGHTFUL COFFEE AT HAND.
I'M ALL DONE! SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING ALL THE WAY THROUGH CLOSING TIME.

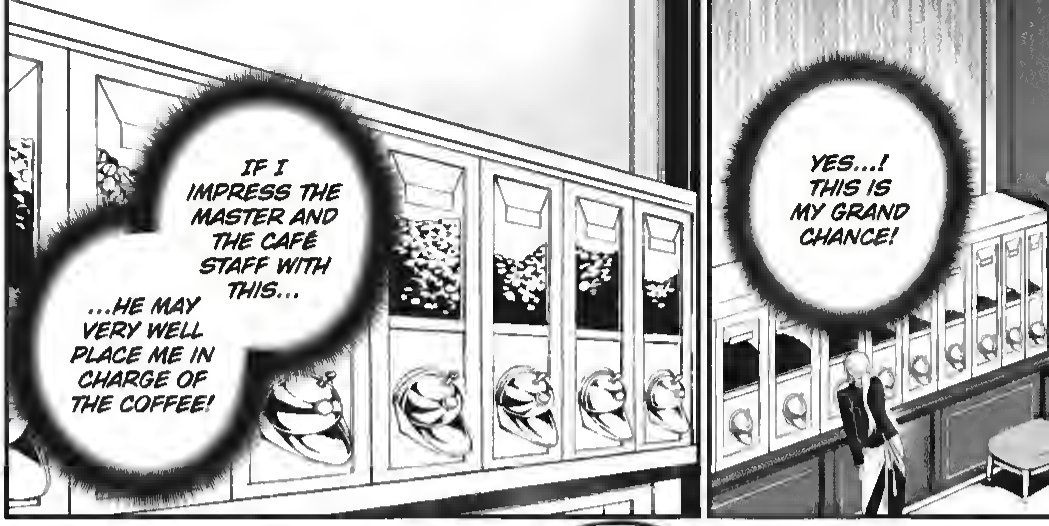
HAAAH...
THE MASTER HERE IS REEEALLY STRICT ABOUT OUR COFFEE THOUGH.
HE WON'T LET ME SO MUCH AS TOUCH THE BREWING INSTRU-MENTS!
TO BE SURE... THOUGH, COFFEE YOUR HIGHNESS BREWS AT THE PALACE IS ALSO QUITE DELECTA-BLE.
THE TASTE OF THE COFFEE HERE IS TRULY ON ANOTHER LEVEL, ISN'T IT?
BOOM
WHOM DID YOU SAY THE DAMES FIND DULL?
SINCE THE LADIES FIND HIM DREADFULLY DULL, HE POURS THOSE PASSIONS INTO COFFEE INSTEAD!
AH WELL, I S'POSE THERE'S NOTHING FOR IT.
OH MY
SHWP
I WANTED YOUR THOUGHTS ON A CERTAIN MATTER. IT'S A PROPOSAL OF SORTS.
HM? WHAT? WHAT WAS THAT, OH MASTER, SIR? ♪
SO QUICK TO CHANGE HIS TUNE...GOOD GRIEF.
HAAH...
IF YOU'RE GOING TO INSULT ME, MAYBE I'LL FORGET ALL ABOUT THIS.

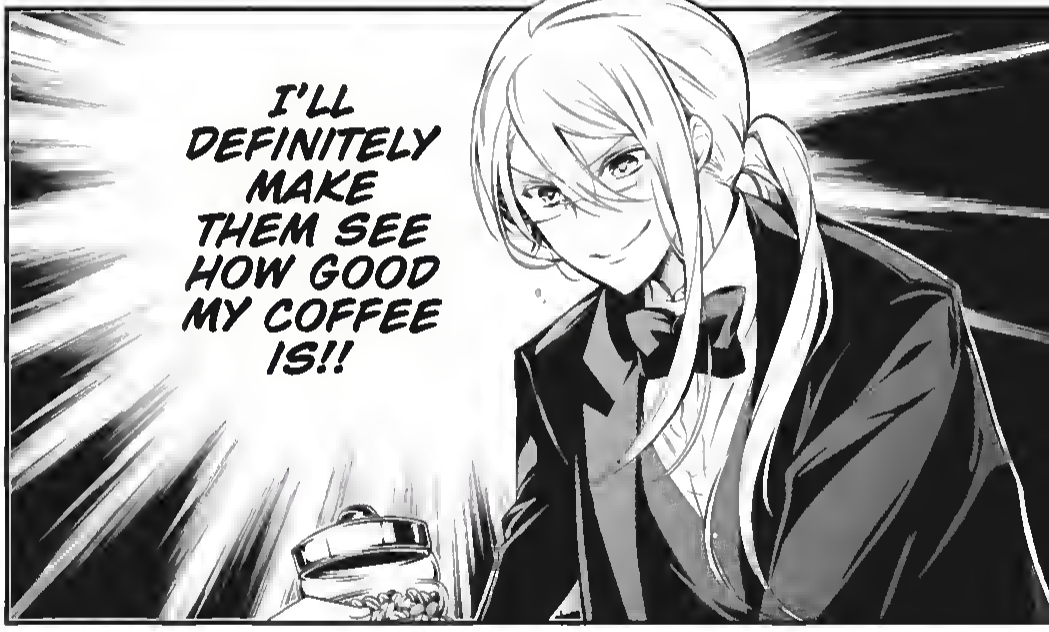
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO SERVE YOUR OWN ORIGINAL BLEND HERE AT THE CAFÉ?
.....
WHA...?

APART FROM THE BLENDS LISTED ON OUR CAFÉ SIGN...
...WE ALSO HAVE THE "COFFEE OF THE DAY," WHICH I CHOOSE BASED ON OUR COFFEE BEAN STORES.
HOWEVER, I HAVE A HABIT OF ROTATING BETWEEN THE SAME OLD CHOICES.
SINCE YOU SEEM TO BE STUDYING WITH A PASSION...
...I THOUGHT THERE'D BE NO HARM IN ASKING IF YOU WANTED TO TRY YOUR HAND AT BLENDING A "COFFEE OF THE DAY."
.....
NATURALLY, THE BLEND SHOULD CONSIST OF BEANS WE HAVE ON HAND...
...AND IT SHOULD BE BREWED USING THE SIPHON MAKER SO WE CAN MORE EASILY KEEP THE FLAVOR CONSISTENT. YOU'D HAVE TO KEEP TO THOSE CONDITIONS.
NOW, IF IT'S TOO MUCH TROUBLE, YOU MAY CERTAINLY DECLINE—
I'LL DO IT!!
EH!

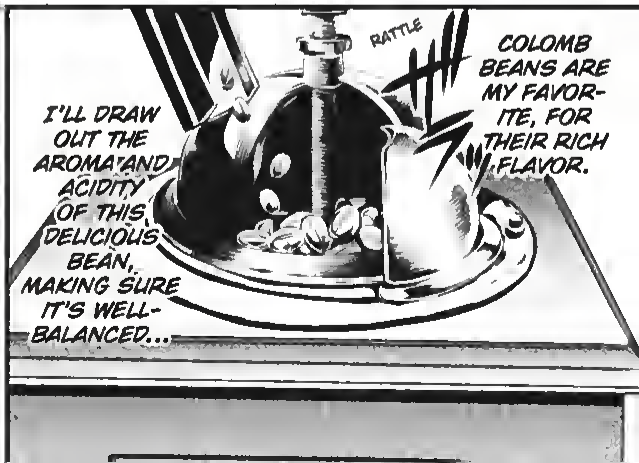
FLUSH
I'LL DO IT!! I'LL DO IT, I'LL DO IT, BY GOD, I'M DOING IT!!
LET ME DO IT, SIR!
AHEM. I WILL HAVE TO TASTE IT MYSELF FIRST...
...TO MAKE SURE IT'S SUITABLE TO SERVE TO OUR CUSTOMERS.
YES, OF COURSE!
.....

.....
TMP
TMP
I'VE JUST THE THING! THERE'S A BLEND I'VE BEEN MULLING OVER.
I'LL GO BREW IT UP NOW, SO WAIT RIGHT HERE!
WHIRL
...I DIDN'T EXPECT HIM TO BE SO ENTHUSIASTIC.
HE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THE EARNEST SORT, NO.
THOUGH HE DOES PAY PROPER ATTENTION TO HIS WORK
IT SEEMS HE IS KEEN TO BE PLACED IN CHARGE OF THE CAFÉ'S COFFEE. WHY, HE HAS EVEN BEEN PRACTICING ON HIS OWN...
HAS HE, NOW? OUR EVER-CONDESCENDING RICH?
HEH HEH.
YOU'RE RICH'S LITTLE BROTHER, THEN? MANY THANKS FOR THIS INVALUABLE INFORMATION, MY BOY.
I AM NOT HIS LITTLE BROTHER.
...BUT AS IT IS A CONVENIENT MISUNDERSTANDING, WE SHALL LET IT BE...


IF I IMPRESS THE MASTER AND THE CAFÉ STAFF WITH THIS...
...HE MAY VERY WELL PLACE ME IN CHARGE OF THE COFFEE!
YES...! THIS IS MY GRAND CHANCE!


I'LL DEFINITELY MAKE THEM SEE HOW GOOD MY COFFEE IS!!

BRGL
BRGL
BRGL
GRIND
GRIND
GRIND


I'LL DRAW OUT THE AROMA AND ACIDITY OF THIS DELICIOUS BEAN, MAKING SURE IT'S WELL-BALANCED...
RATTLE
COLOMB BEANS ARE MY FAVORITE, FOR THEIR RICH FLAVOR.

THE WAIT IS OVER!
YOU DON'T SEEM BUSY. HOW IS YOUR SCHOOLING?
DO YOU GET GOOD MARKS?
I BELIEVE SO. YES.
BUT I AM THE ONE GIVING THE MARKS
CLINK
PLEASE HELP YOURSELVES.
HEY, THIS IS PRETTY GOOD.
NOT BAD...
OH, THAT'S LOVELY!
CHANCES ARE GOOD THAT THE MASTER WILL TOO!
THEY ALL HAD GREAT REACTIONS!
BRILLIANT!
IT IS EASY TO DRINK AND FLAVORFUL TOO.

NO GOOD AT ALL.
ERM...I BLENDED THE BEANS THAT I THOUGHT WOULD TASTE GOOD.
CLINK
THE TASTE IS PLEASANT, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.
HUH!?
WHAT WAS THE CONCEPT BEHIND THIS BLEND OF YOURS?
IF THE CONCEPT IS ALREADY SO SIMILAR, WHY SHOULD THEY ORDER THIS "COFFEE OF THE DAY" WHEN THEY COULD SIMPLY ASK FOR THE USUAL HOUSE BLEND?
THMP
A MILD COFFEE THAT ANY-ONE CAN APPRECI-ATE.
A COFFEE WITH AN EVEN BALANCE OF BITTER-NESS AND ACIDITY...
BUT IT'S IN THE SAME VEIN AS THE HOUSE BLEND WE HAVE AS A PERMANENT OFFERING.

THREE DAYS FROM NOW, ON YOUR NEXT SHIFT, I'LL TEST YOU AGAIN.
PAT
.....
Y-YOU DO HAVE A POINT...
B-BUT...
I'M EXPECTING SOMETHING GOOD.
COME UP WITH A PROPER COFFEE OF THE DAY THAT FITS OUR CAFÉ.
—NH.
.....
NOW, EVERYONE, WE'RE DONE FOR THE DAY.
YES, SIR.
GOOD NIGHT.

BOTHER... I DON'T UNDER-STAND IT.
BEING DELICIOUS ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH?
WHAT PRECISELY AM I SUPPOSED TO DO, THEN?
.....
DESSERT ...!
NO, NO, RELAX. THAT'S NOT IT.
W-WAS IT NOT TO YOUR TASTE, PRINCE LICHT?
EH!?
HEY, WHAT KIND OF BEANS DO YOU USE IN THIS?
FLINCH

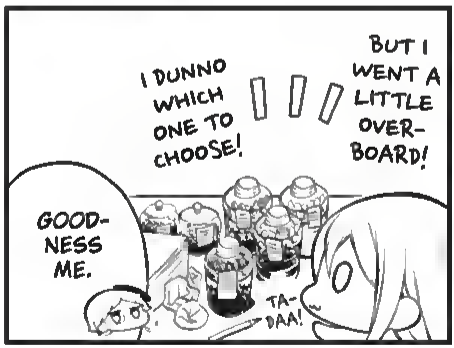
LET'S SEE... HERE YOU ARE.
THANK YOUUU.
I'M ASKING BECAUSE I LIKE IT.
WOULD YOU BE A GENT AND WRITE IT DOWN FOR ME?
LATER, BROTH-ERS!
.....
YOU DIDN'T KNOW, DEAREST BROTHER? LICHT CAN MAKE COFFEE!
?
PSST! PSST!
WHAT THE DEVIL WAS THAT ABOUT?
I THOUGHT SO. THE ROYAL PALACE'S BLEND IS SIMILAR TO OURS TOO.
BUT APPARENTLY, THAT'S NO GOOD. I NEED SOMETHING WITH MORE PERSONALITY...
I'LL JUST HAVE TO EXPERIMENT FOR AS LONG AS I HAVE TIME!
BETTER TO CRANK OUT AS MUCH AS I CAN THAN AGONIZE OVER IT!

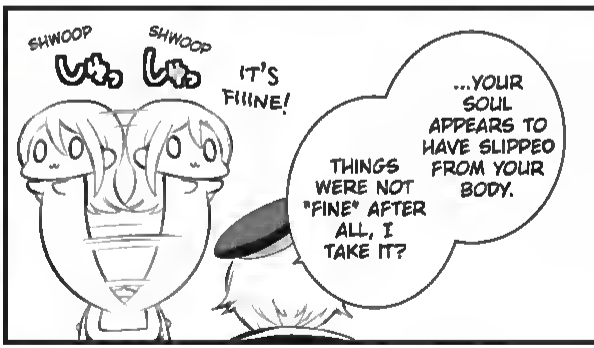
TWO DAYS LEFT UNTIL THE TEST
AH!
NOW, THIS IS DELICIOUS!
I'LL TAKE NOTE OF THIS AS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY, AND NEXT, I'LL GO FOR SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE...
PRINCE LICHT! YOU PROMISED YOU'D TAKE US TO A NICE CAKE SHOP TODAY!
DID YOU FORGET ABOUT OUR DATE!?
SORRYYY! WAIT ANOTHER TWO DAYS FOR ME, MY LOVELIIIES!
ONE DAY LEFT UNTIL THE TEST
TOMORROW'S THE DAY! GOTTA CONCENTRATE!
THIS MAKES FIFTEEN CONTENDERS...
WHEN I'VE COME UP WITH THIRTY OR SO, I'LL DECIDE WHICH ONE TO GO ALL-IN WITH TOMORROW.
...THEREFORE, THIS FORMULA IS.....
YOUR HIGHNESS, PRAY DO CONCENTRATE ON YOUR LESSONS.
I-I KNOOOW, GEEZ! ERM... WHERE WERE WE AGAIN?

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN FARING? YOU'VE BEEN SHUT UP IN YOUR ROOM ALMOST THIS ENTIRE TIME, APART FROM MEALS.
TOMORROW IS THE TASTING FOR YOUR BLEND, YES?
THAT CONCLUDES YOUR LESSONS FOR THE DAY.
IS THAT SO? I WILL MEET YOU HERE COME MORN, THEN, TO SEE YOU TO THE CAFÉ.
IT'S FIIINE. IT'S GOING SMOOTH AS BUTTER! ♪
AWW, ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT LITTLE OL' ME, TEACH?
AND ON THE MORNING OF THE TASTING
.....

YAAAY!
FLAP
ぱた
ぱた
FLAP

WHEE! WHEE!


I DUNNO WHICH ONE TO CHOOSE!
BUT I WENT A LITTLE OVER-BOARD!
GOOD-NESS ME.
TA-DAA!


SHWOOP
SHWOOP
IT'S FIIINE!
...YOUR SOUL APPEARS TO HAVE SLIPPED FROM YOUR BODY.
THINGS WERE NOT "FINE" AFTER ALL, I TAKE IT?

WHOO-HOO!
BROTHERS INDEED.
AND THIS CONUNDRUM HAS DRIVEN HIM TO THE SAME STATE AS PRINCE LEONHARD BEFORE HIM...

KRIK
PERHAPS YOU HAVE MADE YOURSELF TOO TENSE?
RELAX. RELAX.
NGAAH!
SHLOOP
KRAK

I SEE YOU ARE BACK TO YOUR USUAL SELF.
WHA— TEACH!!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING TO GRANZREICH'S PRIDE—THE PRINCE OF BEAUTY—ME!?

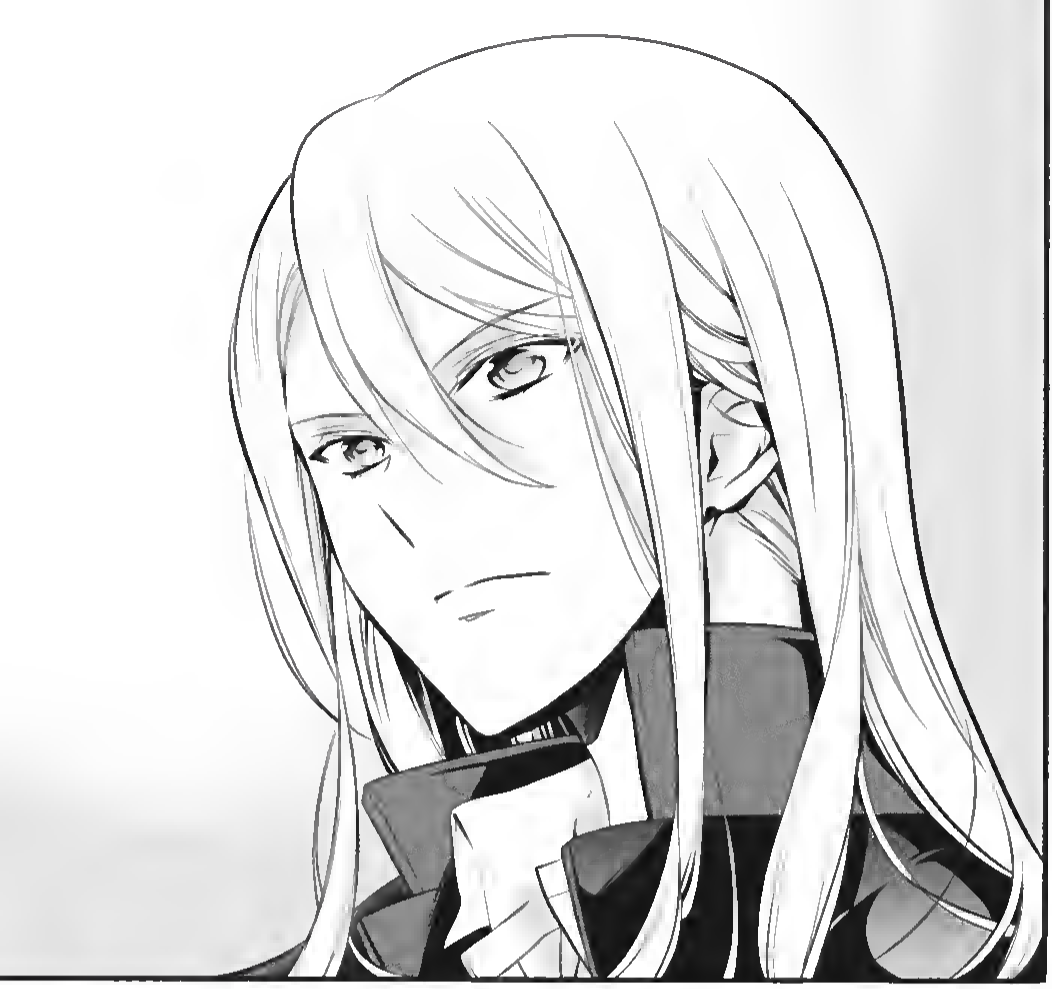
SWEET TOOTH
WELL, LEONIE'S TASTES ARE UNIQUE.
WHAT I LEARNED THEN WON'T HELP
NO?

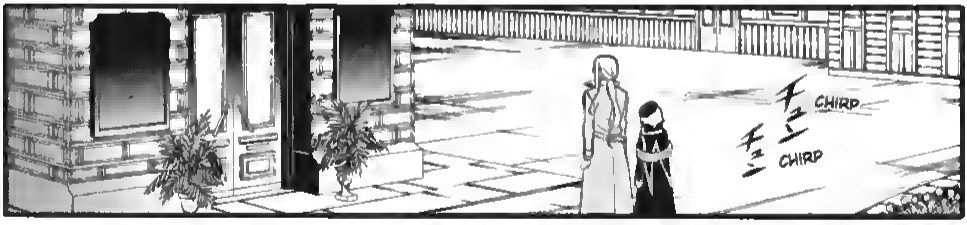
SURELY, YOU NEEDN'T WORRY SO.
YOUR HIGHNESS SUCCESSFULLY CHOSE THE PERFECT COFFEE FOR PRINCE LEONHARD, DID YOU NOT?
HNH...

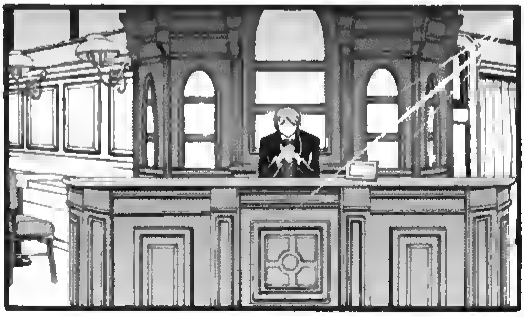
WHETHER IT IS FOR ONE PERSON OR FOR MANY...
...IT IS MY BELIEF THAT THE SENTIMENT BEHIND MAKING COFFEE— MAKING IT FOR ANOTHER'S BENEFIT— REMAINS EVER THE SAME.

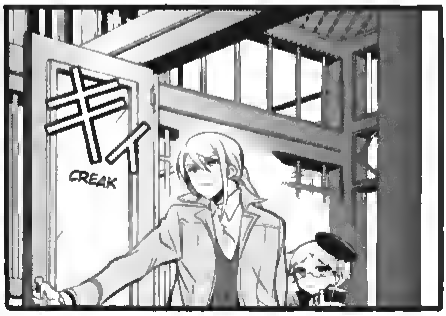
"FOR ANOTHER'S BENEFIT"...?
.....
NOW THEN, IT IS TIME FOR US TO BE OFF TO THE CAFÉ.
Y-YEAH.
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...I WAS SO FIXATED ON MAKING THEM ACKNOWL-EDGE ME...
...MAYBE I WAS ONLY THINKING ABOUT MYSELF...
"I WORK FOR MY COUNTRY, FOR MY PEOPLE..."
THE PERSON I MOST WANT TO MAKE COFFEE FOR RIGHT NOW...
THE PERSON FOR WHOM I MOST WANT TO DO SOME-THING...

"...AND ALSO FOR YOU, MY CHILDREN."




CHIRP
CHIRP




CREAK

OF COURSE!
THEN LET'S DIVE STRAIGHT INTO THE TASTING.
GOOD MORNING, RICHIE.
DO YOU HAVE A BLEND FOR ME?
FWIRL
TUG
SWISH

RATTLE
BURBLE
BURBLE
FWOOM

YOUR COFFEE ...
...IS SERVED!

P-PLEASE HELP YOURSELVES.
OH, WHAT A PLEASANT AROMA!
THANK YOU.

AND ONE FOR YOU.
.....
...WHAT WAS THE CONCEPT BEHIND THIS BLEND?
A-ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN.

THIS BLEND HAS A SPECIAL AROMA AND BOLDNESS...
...CREATED USING REPUBLICA BEANS AS A BASE, WITH THE ADDITION OF MOCHA CITY AND JENGA BEANS TO HELP SHOWCASE THE SUPERB AROMA OF THE REPUBLICA BEANS.
IT DOES. COMPARED TO OUR HOUSE BLEND, I'D SAY IT'S MUCH MORE STRONGLY BITTER.
I BELIEVE THAT IT SHOULD FEEL QUITE DISTINCT FROM THE HOUSE BLEND WITH JUST ONE SIP.
IT IS ROASTED SLIGHTLY DARKER THAN MOST TYPICAL COFFEES.
WHY, THEN, DID YOU MAKE SUCH A BOLD BLEND?
THERE WILL BE MORE THAN A FEW CUSTOMERS WHO WILL FEEL IT IS TOO STRONG FOR THEM.
.....

AMONG THEM, THERE ARE THOSE WHO COME INSIDE SEEKING A BRIEF RESPITE.
TO OUR CUSTOMERS, THIS CAFÉ IS A PLACE OF RELAXATION FROM THEIR BUSY LIVES.
I AIMED TO CREATE A COFFEE EXPERIENCE THAT WOULD LINGER EVEN AFTER THE CUSTOMER FINISHES DRINKING IT, ONE THAT MIGHT GIVE THE CUSTOMER A PLEASANT CHANGE OF MOOD.
THE AROMA OF DEEPLY-ROASTED BEANS IS SOOTHING.
A CUP TO ENCOURAGE THOSE WHO ARE WORKING HARD.
THIS BLEND IS FOR THOSE CUSTOM-ERS.

PRINCE LICHT...
ALL RIGHT, RICH, IT'S TIME TO GET READY TO OPEN.
??
RUFFLE
!
RUFFLE
RUFFLE

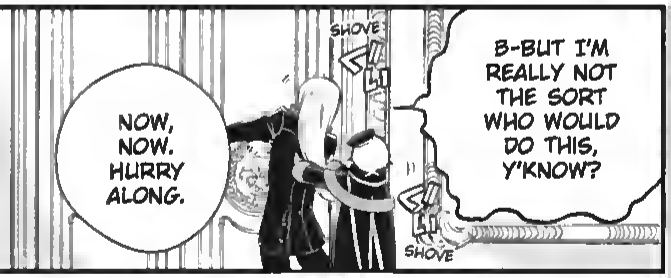
I PASSED !?
YOU MEAN IT!?
TO BE HONEST, YOUR SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE ARE STILL LACKING...
HUH? HUH?
GET THE COFFEE OF THE DAY READY!
WHAT ARE YOU IDLING ABOUT FOR?

THAT'S A BIG STEP FORWARD.
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, YOU MADE IT AFTER THOROUGHLY REFLECTING ON OUR CUSTOMERS.
...BUT THE FLAVOR HIT THE PASSING MARK.

WE'LL LEAVE IT AT THAT.
FOR TODAY, AT LEAST, I'LL BUY INTO THAT POTENTIAL OF YOURS...

OH, I WAS JUST RELISHING YOUR ADMISSION THAT I HAVE TALENT!
WH-WHAT!?
GRIIIN
EH HEH HEH!
EH HEH!
POPULARITY WITH WOMEN HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS!!
SMIRK
にや
GRIN
にや
...THEN YOU'LL HAVE NOTHING ON ME, WILL YOU!?
IF I'VE GOT SKILLS WITH BOTH THE LADIES AND WITH COFFEE...
AH HA HA HA!
I-I'M SORRY!
THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR JOKES! WE HAVE A SHOP TO OPEN, EVERYONE! SNAP TO IT!
YOU SNAP TO IT TOO PLEASE, MASTER.
THE REST OF US STARTED AGES AGO.
AH HA HA!
.....

.....

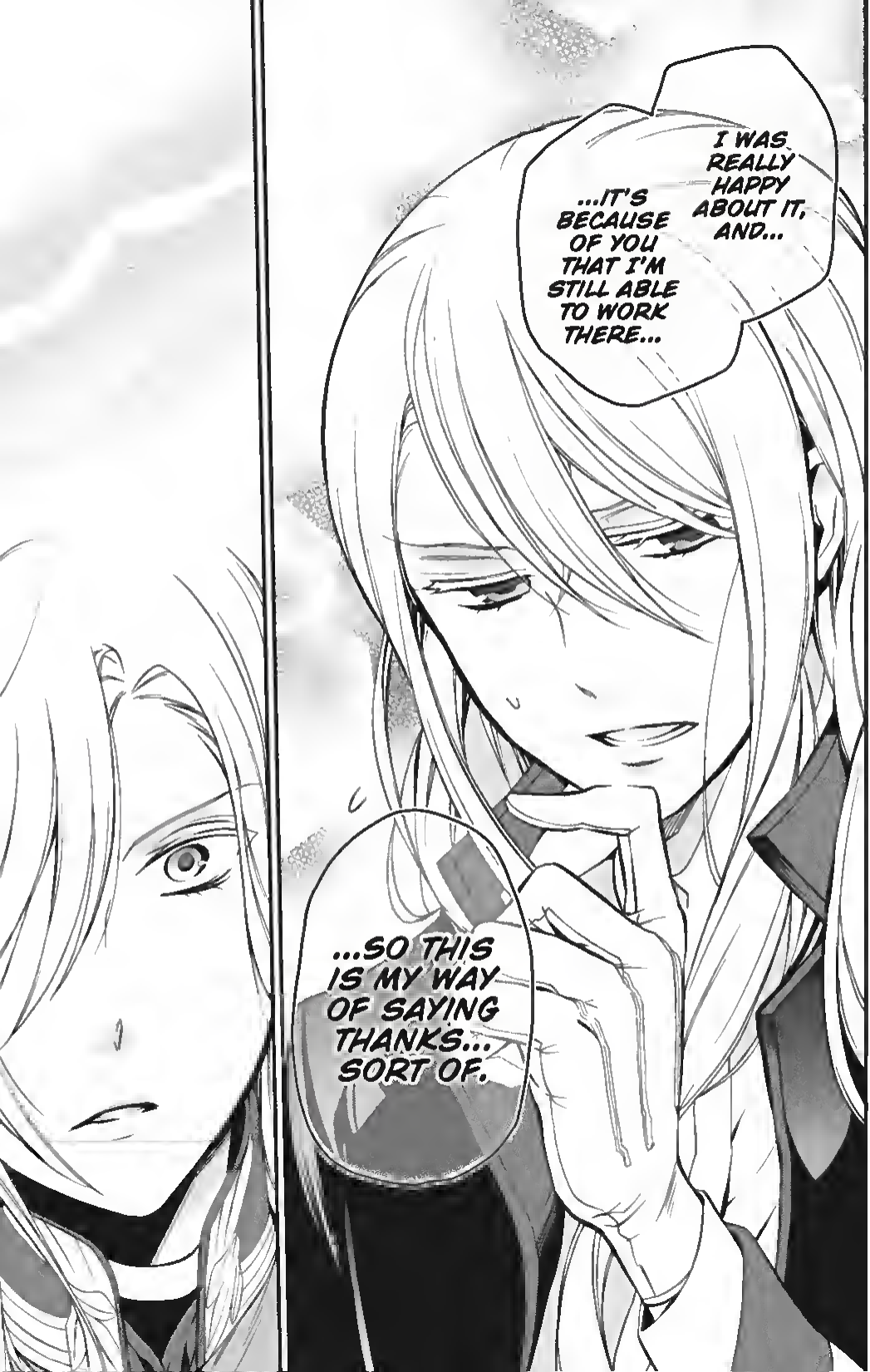

SHOVE
NOW, NOW. HURRY ALONG.
B-BUT I'M REALLY NOT THE SORT WHO WOULD DO THIS, Y'KNOW?
SHOVE

YOUR HIGHNESS PROPOSED THIS YOURSELF, DID YOU NOT?
NOPE... NEVER MIND!
TUUURN
GRAB

...NH.
KACHAK

...LICHT? WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
I'M SORRY, BUT I'M UP TO MY EARS IN WORK...
IF IT ISN'T URGENT, WOULD YOU COME BACK TOMORROW?
OH!
Y-YEAH, OKAY...
AH HA HA.

...AH, DID YOU MAKE ME A CUP OF COFFEE?
ぽぉ
BLUSH
U-UMMM, ACTUALLY, I CAME UP WITH THIS BLEND MYSELF...
AND IT WAS JUST A ONE TIME THING, BUT WE SOLD IT AT THE CAFE TODAY...


I WAS REALLY HAPPY ABOUT IT, AND...
...IT'S BECAUSE OF YOU THAT I'M STILL ABLE TO WORK THERE...
...SO THIS IS MY WAY OF SAYING THANKS... SORT OF.

SHP
BUT IT SEEMS I'VE INTER-RUPTED YOU!
S-SO I'LL SEE MYSELF OUT—
...A DELIGHTFUL AROMA.
IT'S DELICIOUS.

THIS IS JUST WHAT I NEEDED TO RALLY FOR ONE FINAL STAB AT MY WORK.
THANK YOU, LICHT.

.....!
WORK!! WEREN'T YOU SWAMPED WITH WORK!?
MOOSH
LIIICHT!
YOU'VE GROWN TO BE A SON WHO SHOWS NOT ONLY HIS THANKS, BUT SUCH LOVE FOR HIS FATHER!
TRULY, YOU WOULD?
H-HEY, UM. IF YOU WANT, I COULD HELP YOU WITH YOUR WORK A LITTLE?
I MEAN, IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO.
EH-HEH-HEH! THANK YOU, LICHT!
OKAAAY. LIKE THIS?
ALL RIGHT, PUT THOSE PAPERS IN ORDER.
AFTER THAT...
To be continued in the next chapter of The Royal Tutor

The Royal Tutor Chapter 31

Higasa Akai

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